

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993

IN JOINT CONVENTION

GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

The hour having arrived, set by House Joint Resolution No. 7, the Senate met with the House in Joint Convention.

The Joint Convention was called to order by Mr. Speaker Wilder, President of the Joint Convention.

On motion of Senator Crutchfield, the roll call of the Senate was dispensed with.

On motion of Representative Purcell, the roll call of the House was dispensed with.

PRESENT IN CHAMBER

Representative Stamps was recorded as being present in the Chamber.

JOINT CONVENTION, CONTINUED

Thereupon, the Clerk of the Senate read House Joint Resolution No. 7 authorizing the Joint Convention.

On motion, Senator Crutchfield moved that the President appoint a Committee composed of six (6) members from the Senate and six (6) members from the House to notify the Governor that the Joint Convention is in session and awaiting his arrival, which motion prevailed.

Mr. President Wilder appointed a Select Committee composed of Representatives Brooks, Brown, DeBerry, Duer and Owenby; also, Senators Harper; Chair, Holcomb, Leatherwood, Rice, Wallace and Wright.

Without objection, the Joint Convention recessed pending the arrival of the Governor.

The Joint Convention was called to order by President Wilder.

Without objection, the roll calls of the Senate and House were dispensed with.

Senator Harper announced the Governor of the State of Tennessee at the entrance to the House.

President Wilder asked the committee to escort the Governor to please come forward.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

President Wilder introduced the Honorable Ned McWherter, Governor of the State of Tennessee.

STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE

Governor Ned McWherter

February 4, 1993

Governor Wilder. Speaker Naifeh. To the distinguished members of the General Assembly. To the Constitutional officers. To the members of the Public Service Commission. And most of all, the people of Tennessee.

Ten days ago I had the privilege to witness a truly historic moment for Tennessee and for America. In the bright sunshine on the steps of the nation's Capitol, Bill Clinton joined Tennessee's native son Albert Gore to assume the leadership of the world's greatest economic and military superpower.

For me the real significance of this moment was not the transfer of power from one political party to another. Of far greater significance was the transfer of power to a new generation. Born after World War II, it is a generation with a set of experiences different from those which shaped American policy over the past quarter-century.

Looking across this body, it is apparent that a similar change is occurring in Tennessee. Fifty-eight new members have been elected to the House and Senate over the last six years. Each freshman class of the General Assembly establishes more firmly the values and aspirations of a younger generation.

With your permission, I would like today to speak directly to this new generation of leadership. As a Governor who has been a part of this process for 25 years, I would prefer to share a personal perspective about the progress we've made, about the important contributions of this body, and about what the future holds for Tennessee.

My comments are directed to the issue that overshadows all others. In contrast to dozens of states, I am pleased to report that the economic news in Tennessee is good and getting better. In one community after another, layoffs in the older shirt factories and shoe factories are being replaced by new factories, new jobs and higher wages.

Tennessee's economic success is a story that has not gone unnoticed. Last fall U.S. News and World Report listed Tennessee among the nation's ten strongest economies. Last month the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta reported that Tennessee and Georgia are emerging from the recession as the strongest economies in the South. As many of you recall, these stories followed a report by

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

City and State Magazine that ranked Tennessee as the best managed state government in America.

In 1987, I stood on the steps of the Legislative Plaza and asked the men and women in this Legislature to take a leap of faith. I pledged that if you would trust me to provide the leadership I would develop a 95 County Job plan that would try to do nothing less than reverse the economic tide in Tennessee.

On that cold January day back in 1987, Tennessee's rate of unemployment was stalled a full point above the national average. I could look around this room and quickly put together a list of communities where plants shut down in the 1980's. Like the small shoe factory I owned in Martin, most of these plants were labor intensive and were destroyed by foreign competition.

Six years ago there were forty Tennessee counties which suffered from unemployment rates of at least ten percent. In many counties the jobless rates were over twenty percent.

The problem was compounded by another alarming change in Tennessee's economy. While Tennessee was still able to attract new industries, it had become clear that the great majority of new jobs were locating in two or three regions of the state. Out there in the real world, on the courthouse squares, we were drifting, slowly but surely, toward two Tennessees.

In one, incomes were rising, schools were well-funded, and kids could look forward to working in the community where they grew up. In the other Tennessee, the hospital closed, the school buildings leaked, and hope was quickly fading.

On the first day of my Administration, I made a fundamental decision about my priorities as Governor and my vision of where I wanted to lead this state. It was not a complicated vision developed in the think tanks of Washington or Boston. Rather, it was a simple vision that emerged from the hopes and fears of thousands of Tennesseans across this great state.

My vision for Tennessee, and my overriding priority as Governor, is to rebuild our economic base so that every community in Tennessee has a chance to share in our state's prosperity. In practical terms, the vision is based on the belief that each Tennessee community must be equipped with the resources to answer four basic questions.

Do you have access to the interstate highway system?

Do you have access to adequate primary health care?

Do you have a plan to manage your waste?

And, most important--do you have schools that can provide a skilled work force?

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

Over the last six years, every major legislative initiative of my administration has been designed, directly or indirectly, to address these four issues. With the leadership of John Wilder and Jimmy Naifeh, and to the lasting credit of this Legislature, you have helped me put in place the statutory authority needed to rebuild Tennessee's economic foundation.

To those who would someday inherit the leadership of this body, I emphasize that our accomplishments were possible because we left partisanship at the doors of the House and Senate. Because of this bi-partisan cooperation, the results of our efforts are having a direct impact on the quality of life in every community of this state.

Anyone here who drove to Nashville saw evidence of the largest road construction program in Tennessee's history. Over the last four years we have quietly contracted with nearly a hundred young doctors who are now providing primary health care in Tennessee's underserved communities.

We have successfully negotiated a twenty-year agreement with Kentucky, Alabama and South Carolina to manage safely our hazardous waste without the need for a landfill. Through the leadership of Chairman Ronnie Greer, A Republican, and Chairman I.V. Hillis, a Democrat, we are implementing a solid waste program that more than fifty counties have joined to begin managing their waste on a regional basis.

And through the courage of leaders like Ray Albright and Andy Womack in the Senate and Bill Purcell and Gene Davidson in the House, we now have a 21st Century Schools program that many predicted would never happen. In more than 1,800 Tennessee school, we are implementing what the President of R.J.R. Nabisco has called the most comprehensive program of education reform in America.

Six years have passed since the General Assembly joined me in believing it was possible to change the course of economic history in Tennessee. It is appropriate that we pause this morning to be held accountable for our efforts.

Today, Tennessee's rate of unemployment has gone from a point above the national average to one and a half points below the national average. We have located new industries in thirty-seven of the forty most depressed counties. Today, only eight of ten of those forty counties still have unemployment rates over ten percent.

No longer are the majority of new jobs found only in two or three areas of Tennessee. In the last eighteen months, we have used incentives to bring new plants to places like Jasper, Lawrenceburg, Carthage, Fayetteville and Waverly. The 400 low wage jobs lost in McMinnville at the Lewis Strauss plant have been replaced by 400 high wage jobs at Bridgestone. The 475 jobs lost in Jackson at Bemis Mills have been replaced by an equal number at Maytag.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

And just last week we received the most recent indication that our economic strategy is working. In a report issued by the federal Department of Commerce, personal income in Tennessee is growing at a rate surpassed only by two small Western states, Idaho and Montana.

Because of your help, Tennessee is now positioned better than most of our sister states to take advantage of the opportunities that await us during the next decade. My challenge for the next two years is to protect and strengthen the economic infrastructure we have worked so hard to build.

This challenge will require that we continue to expand our resources for industrial development. It will mean that we cannot compromise the funding of our road program. It will force us to make some difficult choices to prevent our budget from being wrecked by the growing cost of health care. And most important, it will demand that we keep our commitment to give 830,000 young Tennesseans the chance for a good education. I will speak to each of these issues next week when I present you my recommendations for the 1994 budget.

In the coming weeks, there will be dozens of issues facing this General Assembly which are worthy of your attention. Governor Wilder has expressed a desire to restructure and improve our court system. Speaker Naifeh has an excellent proposal to make needed changes in our campaign finance laws. You can expect the Administration to take a position on these and other issues at an appropriate time.

But I would like to dedicate the last portion of my remarks to what I believe my priority as Governor should be for the final two years of this Administration. Being a so-called "lame duck" affords me the unique chance to make decisions without having to worry about the political consequences. It does not mean that I won't have any more initiatives, or that I don't plan to work hard at being Governor.

Those who fail to see this distinction are confused about what makes a good Governor or legislator. While they want us to "run government like a business," they seldom stop to realize that Federal Express and Tennessee Eastman don't have ten new programs or reorganizations each year. In government as well as in business, success comes from having a vision of where you want to go, developing a long-range plan, and then working hard to implement it.

I urge the younger members of this body to remember that we are not elected to entertain the media or the public with press events and legislative controversy. Offering ten major initiatives each year would get our names in the paper and make us celebrities, but what does it accomplish for the people of Tennessee if the ideas never get fully implemented?

The needed laws for my major economic initiatives in education, health care, roads and the environment have all been passed by the Legislature. We've had the press conferences and bill signings, but

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993 -- FOURTH LEGISLATIVE DAY

the truth is passing laws is the easy part. Making an education reform program, or a waste program, or a road program, or a children's program or a prison program actually produces results that require far more attention than most people realize.

When I sometimes say my Administration is in the fourth quarter, I am emphasizing that the last two years will determine if all these efforts produce something besides good press releases. We have done well for three quarters, but if we neglect the task of implementation in the fourth quarter we run the risk of squandering all that we have worked so hard to accomplish.

I close with a final word to the generation of men and women who are preparing to accept the torch of leadership. You are the most affluent and well-educated generation ever to sit in this body. Your ideas and approaches will often be at odds with the older generation.

But while your counterparts in Washington inherit a federal government with serious long-term problems, you are inheriting a Tennessee whose future is limited only by your imagination. My generation has done its best to provide this inheritance.

America and Tennessee are changing hands. It is time for you to dream your dreams and make your plans.

Thank you.

Mr. President Wilder relinquished the Chair to Mr. Speaker Naifeh, as President of the Joint Convention.

The purpose for which the Joint Convention was called having been accomplished, Mr. President Naifeh declared the Joint Convention dissolved.